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Oregon Agricultural College
EXPERIMENT STATION
CORVALLIS, OREGON

CIRCULAR No. 19 FEBRUARY, 1912

OREGON STATION TRAP-NEST

High egg production is not a characteristic of any one breed of fowls. The trap-nest has demonstrated this. There are good and poor layers in all breeds. There is no particular shape or type that indicates good laying qualities, so far, at any rate, as our present knowledge goes.

The only certain method of separating the good layers from the poor is to use the trap-nest and keep a daily record of eggs laid. It is not always the fault of the feed and care that they don't do better. It is the misfortune of the hen herself very often; she couldn't lay if she wanted to.

It requires considerable time to keep a trap-nest record of a flock of hens. Not every farmer has the time, but if a few farmers in every county would trap-nest a flock of hens, in a few years all the farmers of the county would very likely have stock that were from heavy-laying trap-nested fowls. Where it is possible for a farmer to devote a little time to it each day he will be well repaid for the labor. The Oregon Experiment Station is trap-nesting a large flock each year and it is doing the best it can to furnish the farmers of the state with stock from good layers, with the object of increasing the egg yield in the state. It is desirable, of course, to keep a full year's record for each hen, but if that is not possible, a record for part of the year would be valuable. For instance, a record of the first six months of laying, beginning probably in November, would show which were the good winter producers. Those that wouldn't produce well during the first six months would not be good fowls to keep for breeding, and they could be killed off. If it isn't possible to keep a six month's record, then a three months' record would be valuable. Hens that produced well for three months, beginning November, would be the most profitable fowls in the flock, and they should be retained for breeding early winter layers.

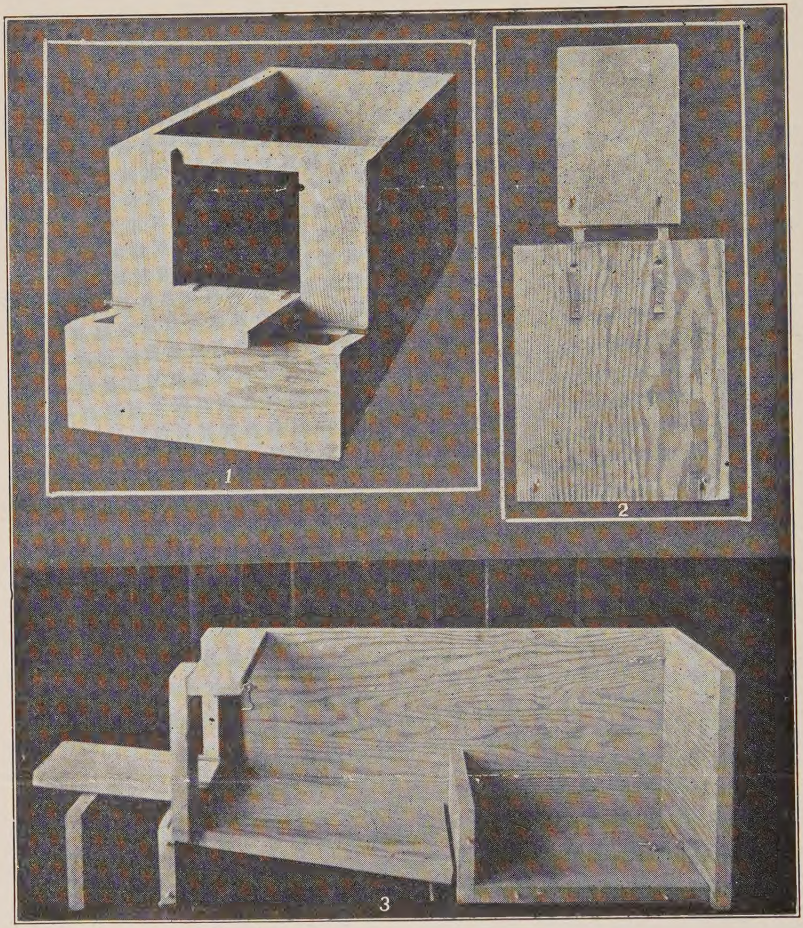
It has been shown in our experiments that the poor layers during the first year, are usually the poor layers the second year. If at the end of a full year's record all hens that had laid less than 100 eggs or 120, were to be killed off, it would save the farmers keeping a lot of fowls at a loss for another year. From 25 to 50% of the fowls in the average flock do not pay for their keep.

A great many trap-nests have been patented and put on the market. The one we use, described herein, has been thoroughly tested and we know of no better. It is not patented and anyone is at liberty to make it without fear of prosecution. This trap-nest has been in use 10 years. (Utah Station Bulletin 92, and Oregon Station Circular 4.) The main or essential points in a good trap-nest are simplicity, cheapness, and accuracy in operation. Our trap-nest, when properly made, fully answers these requirements. The hen, of course, must be numbered by means of a leg band. The best leg band is one that has a raised figure. This makes it more easily read.

As the hen enters this nest her weight closes the door, and it

is impossible for her to get out or another hen to enter. The opening into the nest is made just large enough for one hen at a time to enter. This is a feature that is necessary in any trap-nest, in order to secure accuracy.

It is necessary to visit the nests two or three times during the day to release the hens, and there should, of course, be enough nests so that there will always be some vacant, otherwise there is liable to



TRAPNEST.—1. Front view with door open. 2. Door and trip-board. 3. Side view with one side removed.

be eggs laid on the floor. For a flock of 50 hens, ten or twelve nests will be sufficient if they are visited often enough.

The nests may be built singly or in groups. They may be set in the wall of the house, or they may be set inside the wall. They may also be made and set up outside, separate from the house. It is sometimes an advantage to release the hens from the top instead of through the door. This can be done where there is only one tier of

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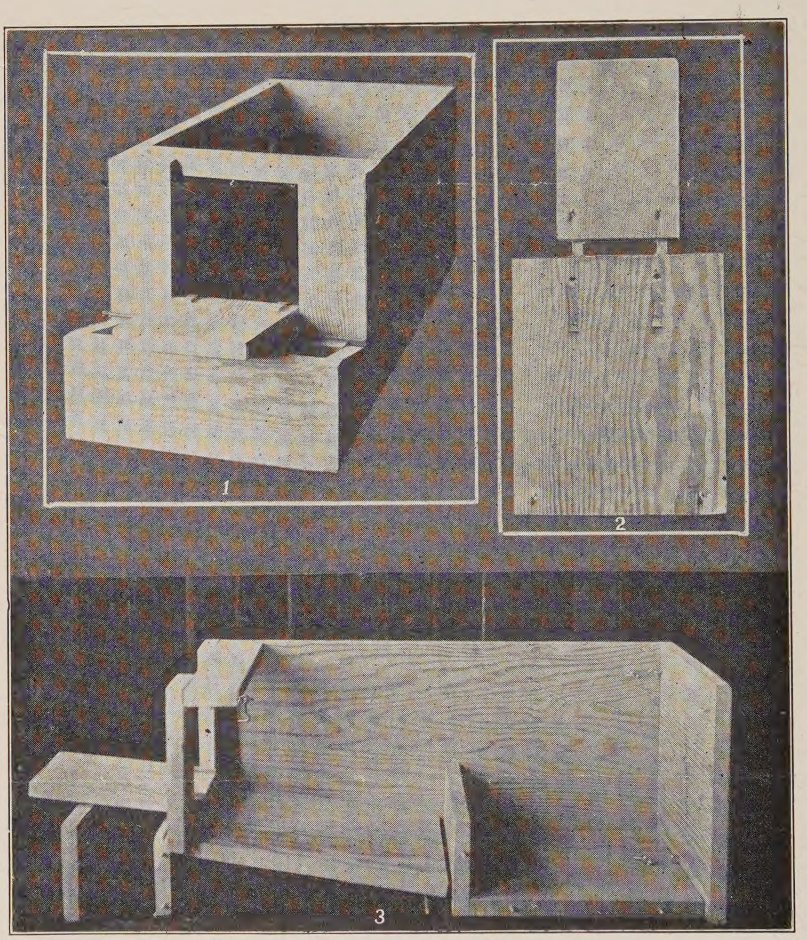

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nests. Occasionally a hen is slow in coming to the door to be let out, and by pulling the nest out or raising the cover, the operation of releasing the hens may be more quickly performed. We have found that with the small active breeds there is not much trouble on this score. They come quickly to the door. The heavier breeds like the Plymouth Rocks usually take their time in coming out and sometimes have to be pulled out. Where they can be reached from the top this trouble is overcome.

The dimensions given in this bulletin are for small fowls and medium sized fowls up to not more than seven pounds. It will be necessary to add an inch or two to the dimensions for the large breeds and increase the size or width of opening for the door.

HOW TO MAKE IT.

The trap-nest can be made by anyone who can use a saw and drive a nail. It can all be cut out of a 12″ board, 10′ long. The material consists of:

1 board 1″x12″x10′

6 screw eyes No. 210 Bright.

2 pieces of iron rod 3/16″x12″

2 pieces rawhide 9″x½″

The diagram shows how the nest may be cut out of the board. The shaded portions are the waste pieces of the board. The solid black lines show where the board is to be cut. When cutting the sides apart it will be necessary to cut only as far as X then split the boards apart, after which cut out the required angle.

After nailing together, turn the nest on its side and bore the holes in the sides for the 3-16″ iron rod. The holes are 1″ from the bottom and 1¼″ from the nest front.

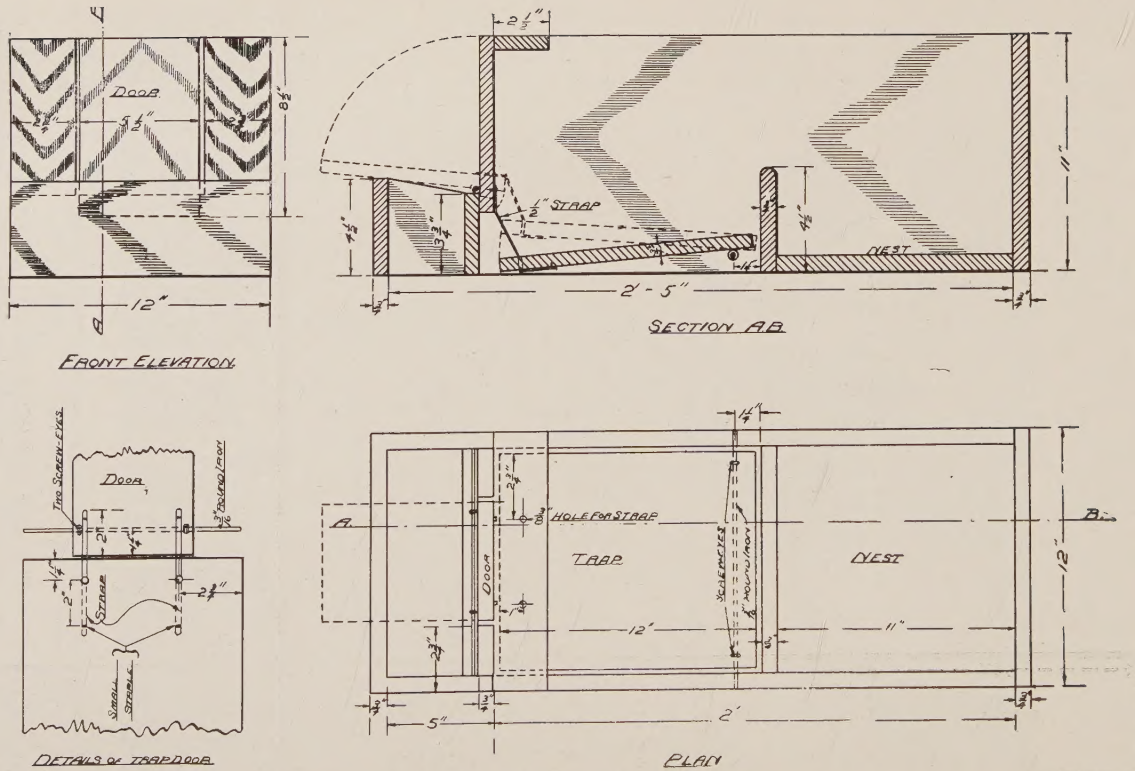
On the bottom of the trip-board, put a screw eye ⅞″ from the end and 1″ from each side. At the other end of trip-board, bore ⅜″ holes, 1″ from one end and 3″ from each side.

On the bottom and at each side of the door put in a screw eye 1½″ from the end and ¾″ from the sides. On the upper side tack two rawhide strips using a small staple or nail for each. The end of the strap will be 2″ from the end and ¼″ from the side of the door.

Place the door in front of the trip-board, the screw eyes down; push the rawhide strips through the holes in the trip-board; turn the boards over and draw the strips up tight then bend the door back over the trip-board until there is full ¾″ between the boards when laid flat; the strap should then be tacked to the lower side of the trip-board.

The door and trip-board are put in place by pushing the iron rods through the sides and the screw eyes. Care should be taken in placing the screw eyes in the proper places. The screw eyes may be adjusted in order to make the door balance properly.

JAMES DRYDEN.



PLAN OF OREGON STATION TRAP-NEST

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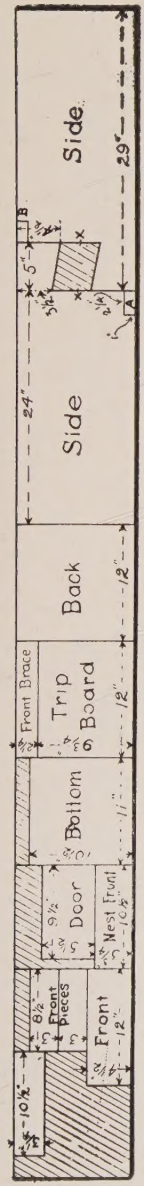

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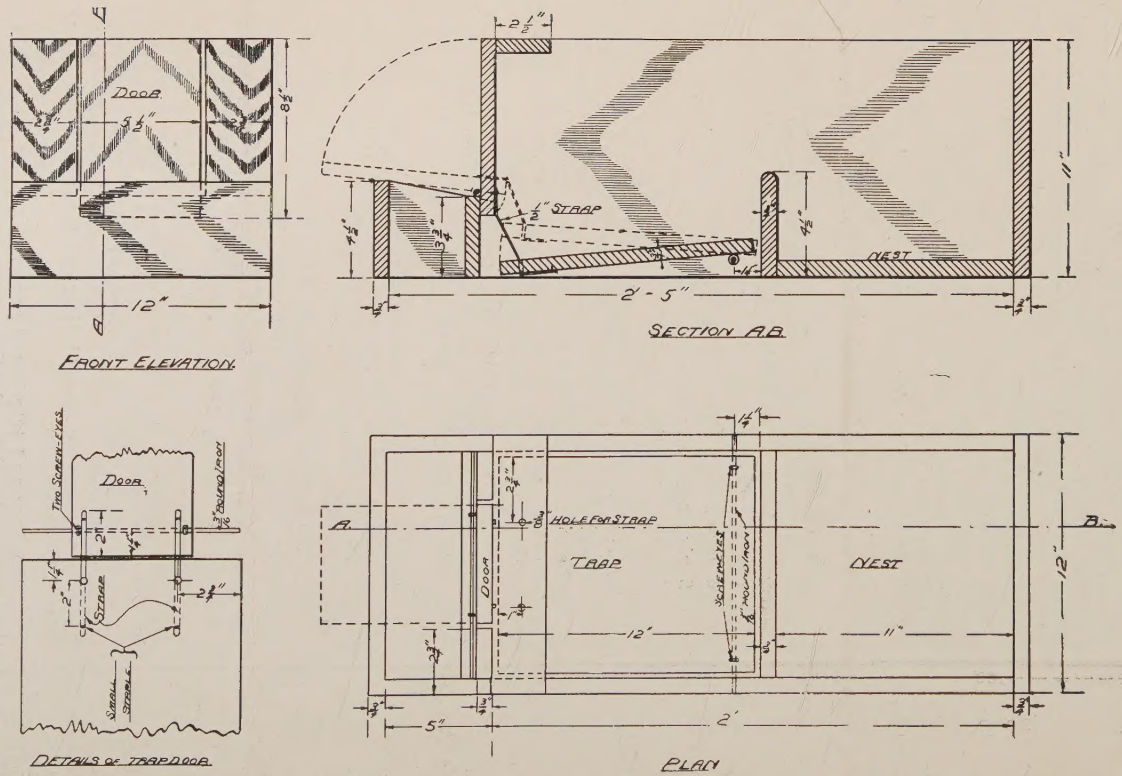

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